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ABSTRACT

"Broadsides" are notices written on disposable, single sheets of paper printed on one side only, intended to have an immediate impact on readers. Broadsides had an impact in colonial America--they delivered the latest news and much more: government proclamations, public service announcements, opinion papers, advertisements, and entertainment updates. Broadsides addressed virtually every aspect of the American Revolution, and they provide a wide range of suitable classroom topics. In this lesson, students in grades 6-8 will use the resources of the Library of Congress' Printed Ephemera Collection to experience the news as the colonists heard it. The lesson plan: provides an introduction; cites subject areas, time required, and skills developed; poses a guiding question; gives learning objectives; informs teachers about preparing to teach the lesson; presents four suggested activities--the fourth activity is to put together a class play about events leading up to the American Revolution; offers additional activities for extending the lesson; lists selected Websites; and addresses standards alignment. Contains a broadsides analysis worksheet. (NKA)

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EDsitement Lesson Plan.

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Colonial Broadsides: A Student-Created Play

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GRADES 6-8

Introduction

Gutenberg printed his first in 1454. They are still printed today. They are broadsides: notices written on disposable, single sheets of paper printed on one side only, intended to have an immediate impact on readers.

Broadsides did have an impact in colonial America. They delivered the latest news and much more: government proclamations, public service announcements, opinion papers, advertisements, and entertainment updates. Broadsides address virtually every aspect of the American Revolution, providing a wide range of suitable classroom topics. In this lesson, students will use the resources of the Library of Congress's Printed Ephemera Collection to experience the news as the colonists heard it.

Note: For an introduction to and a complementary lesson on broadsides, see the EDSITEment lesson plan, Colonial Broadsides and the American Revolution.

Guiding Question:

In what ways can you connect broadsides to events leading to the American Revolution? What attitudes and political positions are revealed in the broadsides?

Learning Objectives

After completing the lessons in this unit, students will be able to

- List important events leading to the American Revolution in chronological order
- Discuss the connections between broadsides and the American Revolution.

Preparing to Teach this Lesson

- Review the lesson plan. Locate and bookmark suggested materials and other useful websites. Download and print out selected documents and duplicate copies as necessary for student viewing.
- Either this lesson or the complementary EDSITEment lesson, Colonial Broadsides and the American Revolution, would work well as a culminating activity for a class studying the causes of the American Revolution.
- An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and Other Printed Ephemera, available on the EDSITEment-reviewed website American Memory, offers an Introduction to An American Time Capsule, featuring excellent background information on broadsides and other printed ephemera.
- Concerning the broadside No Stamped Paper to be had, available on American Memory, the Introduction to An American Time Capsule states: "Revolutionary leaders used widely circulated newspaper extras to publicize colonial solidarity and encourage future concerted efforts against

Subject Areas

History and Social Studies
U.S. History - Colonial America and the New Nation
Literature and Language Arts
American

Time Required

One 45-minute class for review (activities 1 and 2)
Two to four 45-minute classes for activities 3 and 4

Skills

Collaboration
Interpreting primary documents
Using a search function online
Establishing a chronology of events
Leading and participating

Additional Data

Date Created: 06/17/02

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British measures. 'No Stamped Paper to be had' reports a variety of colonial efforts intended to force the repeal of the hated Stamp Act of 1765, including Boston printers vowing to continue printing papers without stamps, New York and Philadelphia merchants resolving not to import British goods, New Jersey freemen declaring that they would ignore the act and all who support it, and public hangings of the effigy of the stampman in Halifax and the effigy of the Lt. Governor in New York."

- Review the interactive timeline The Coming of Independence: Key Events from the EDSITEment resource Learner.org. Notice that this timeline offers much more than a list of events; you can access useful introductory secondary texts for virtually every event on the timeline with a single click on the T symbol in the right-hand column.
- Selecting a broadside when browsing or searching leads you to a bibliography page. Clicking on the thumbnail on the bibliography page leads to the image page. The image page offers one click access to higher quality digitized copies of the original (.jpg and TIFF files), bibliographic information, and a full text version of the broadside in contemporary typeface. The full text option is in the heading. URLs provided in this lesson lead to the bibliography page.
- If desired, set up a large-scale timeline or other device in the classroom on which students can post broadsides.
- Additional reading on this subject can be found at American Memory's Read More About It.

Suggested Activities

A Student-Created Play Based on Colonial Broadsides

Note: If your class has already completed the complementary EDSITEment lesson, Colonial Broadsides and the American Revolution, you may wish to begin with activity number 3, below.

1 If desired, begin with a review of important events prior to the American Revolution. Share the timeline The Coming of Independence: Key Events from the EDSITEment resource Learner.org. Students can explore the links to additional information and documents.

2 If your class did not complete complementary EDSITEment lesson, Colonial Broadsides and the American Revolution, introduce the class to broadsides. Share with the class the broadside No Stamped Paper to be had from the EDSITEment-reviewed website American Memory. (NOTE: Click the thumbnail for access to the image page. There, as described in the Preparing to Teach section above, you have one-click access to the full-text (modern typeset) version of the broadside as well as higher quality images.)

Discuss what can be learned from this broadside about the Stamp Act and the colonists' reaction to the Stamp Act:

- Why does the broadside begin with the story of the hanging in effigy of a stampman?
- What different locations are mentioned in the broadside? Why?
- What sorts of actions does the broadside report? Why?
- Why does the section from New York on November 6th bother to mention that the crowd stopped at the coffee house?
- What attitudes about the king are expressed? What do they reveal about the state of the rebellion?
- What attitudes about bureaucrats are expressed? What do they reveal about the state of the rebellion?
- What sorts of people are described as taking action against the Stamp Act? Why did they take action? Why are they mentioned?

3 Inform students that they will be working in small groups to analyze one broadside. Each group will develop a set of questions (such as those above) to use in leading a discussion with the class.

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- Assign a different broadside to each group or allow students to select their own by searching/browsing An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and Other Printed Ephemera on the EDSITEment resource American Memory. Make sure students understand how to search, browse, and access the bibliographic information, full text, and higher quality versions of a document. See the last note in the section above, Preparing to Teach this Lesson, or the detailed information in the Tips section of Colonial Broadsides and the American Revolution.
- Allow time for groups to read the full-text (modern typeset) version of their assigned broadside and to do any research about the event to which their broadside relates. Links from The Coming of Independence: Key Events, available on the EDSITEment-reviewed website Learner.org, provide good basic information about important events. Click once on the T in the right-hand column. Also, see the links from the EDSITEment resource Internet Public Library, provided below in Selected EDSITEment Websites.
- If desired, a Broadside Analysis Worksheet is available to help students examine a particular broadside. This worksheet is based on the Written Document Analysis Worksheet from the EDSITEment resource Digital Classroom. Make sure students understand that they will not necessarily be able to fill in every item for every broadside. For example, some broadsides do not reveal the author.
- Each group is responsible for designing discussion questions related to the document and for selecting a sentence (or two) from the document that sums up its contents and attitude. The group should not read the entire document to the class.
- Duplicate sufficient copies of the selected broadsides to share among the class. Proceed chronologically as each group leads the class in discussion about its document.

4 Based on their research, student groups can now put together a class play about the events leading up to the American Revolution. Each group should create a short, simple skit (no costumes or scenery) based on its broadside. Here's one way you might organize the class for the skits.

1. The student groups will base their skit on the broadside they analyzed above.
2. Within each group, one student should serve as the narrator, who will announce the start of each skit using the chosen sentence (or two) from the broadside, as well as the date, location, and any other pertinent facts.
3. The broadsides were previously handed out, so distribution of them at this point is unnecessary unless a group used a different broadside. In that case, someone from the group could play the part of the delivery person, making distribution of the broadside part of the skit and the spectators participants.
4. Proceed chronologically until all of the groups have had an opportunity to present their skits.
5. A short discussion of the various broadsides could follow the class's presentation, with students classifying each broadside into categories as it is presented (subjective or objective, official document or news report, pro-British or pro-American, informative or inflammatory, possible effects on public opinion).
6. You can have a central place in the classroom for "posting" broadsides, such as a timeline. If the postings are done in chronological order, this will reinforce lessons about the dates of major events.

When all of the skits have been presented, debrief the class through discussion. What was the cumulative effect of the broadsides on students' ideas about life in the colonies prior to the American Revolution? Did becoming familiar with a range of broadsides make the events leading up to the American Revolution seem more slow or more rapid than students had previously thought? What surprising elements came to light through the broadsides? Did students come across broadsides indicating support for the British Crown? For rebellion? How does the spread of news on the Internet compare to the spread of news through broadsides?

Extending the Lesson

- Students can browse An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and Other Printed Ephemera on the EDSITEment-reviewed website American Memory for other documents of interest.

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- Students can create their own broadsides about current issues of interest to young people.
- Students can produce facsimile broadsides for other important historical events.
- Students can establish relationships between specific broadsides and the grievances listed in the Declaration of Independence. These could be illustrated in a list, slide show or through links from the text of the Declaration.
- EDSITEment offers a related lesson, Declare the Causes: The Declaration of Independence - Understanding Its Structure and Origin. Though designed for younger students, it can be adapted for middle school.

Selected EDSITEment Websites

- American Memory [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ammemhome.html]
  - An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and Other Printed Ephemera [http://memory.loc.gov/rbc/rbpe/rbpe03/rbpe035/]
  - Documents from the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention, 1774-1789 [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/bdsds/bdsdhome.html]
- Digital Classroom: Written Document Analysis Worksheet [http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/analysis/write.html]
- The Internet Public Library [http://www.ipl.org/]
  - The American Revolution [http://revolution.h-net.msu.edu/]
  - From Revolution to Reconstruction [http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/]
  - Revwar.com [http://www.revwar.com/]
- Learner.org [http://www.learner.org/index.html]
  - The Coming of Independence: Key Events [http://www.learner.org/biographyofamerica/prog04/key_events/index.html]

Other Information

Standards Alignment

1. NCSS-2

   Time, continuity, and change. The ways human beings view themselves in and over time. more

2. NCSS-5

   Individuals, groups, and institutions. more

3. NCSS-6

   Power, authority, and governance. more

4. NCTE/IRA-1

   Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works. more

5. NCTE/IRA-5

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Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. more

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Name _____ Date _____

Broadsides Analysis Worksheet

http://edsitement.neh.gov

1. NOTABLE PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE DOCUMENT:

   (Check one or more. Make specific notes on the lines provided.)

   ____ Masthead _____

   ____ Typeface _____

   ____ Seals _____

   ____ Drawings _____

   ____ Notations _____

   ____ Other _____

2. DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT: _____

3. AUTHOR (AND/OR PRINTER): _____

4. POSITION (TITLE): _____

5. FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN? _____

_____

6. DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-H.)

   A. To what event(s) does the broadside refer?

   _____

   B. What action(s) does the broadside report?

   _____

   C. What specific actions (if any) are encouraged?

   _____

   D. What does the author consider important?

   _____

   _____

   _____

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E. Why do you think this broadside was written?

F. What evidence reveals why the broadside was written? Quote from the document.

G. List two things the document reveals about life in America at that time.

H. Write a question to the author left unanswered by the document.

WRITE ANY OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES HERE:

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